



**Regional Advisory Committee (RAC) Meeting #102**

June 7, 2023

9:00 am – 11:30 am

**Zoom Meeting**

**NOTES**

**Attendance**

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**RAC Members**

Richard Whipple (Chair), County of San Diego  
Anne Bamford, American Water Works Association  
Anne Middleton, ECOLIFE Conservation  
Brook Sarson, San Diego Sustainable Living Institute  
Chris Trees for Mike Thornton, San Elijo JPA  
David Walker, San Diego Audubon Society  
Elizabeth Lovsted for Kelly Gage, San Diego County Water Authority  
Erica Wolski, Ramona MWD  
Jimmy Smith, San Diego Waterboard  
Joey Randall for Kim Thorner, Olivenhain Municipal Water District  
John Flores, San Pasqual Band of Mission Indians  
Julia Chunn-Heer, Surfrider Foundation  
Julia Escamilla, Rincon del Diablo Municipal Water District  
Justin Gamble and Tim Murphy, City of Oceanside  
Karen Jassoy, Padre Dam Municipal Water District  
Kelly Craig and Maggie Aleksic for Charlie de la Rosa, San Diego Zoo Wildlife Alliance  
Kimberly O'Connell and Amanda Loeper, UCSD Clean Water Utility  
Leslie Cleveland for Jack Simes, U.S Bureau of Reclamation  
Marissa Potter, Santa Fe Irrigation District  
Mark Seits, Floodplain Management Association  
Michelle Berens, Helix Water District  
Oscar Romo, Alter Terra  
Patrick McDonough, San Diego CoastKeeper  
Paul Oberbauer, Sweetwater Authority  
Rob Hutsel, San Diego River Park Foundation  
Toby Roy, RCAC  
Tory Walker for Wayne Rosenbaum, Building Industry Association  
Wbaldo Arellano, City of Imperial Beach

**RWMG Staff and Consultants**

Arthella Vallarta, Woodard & Curran  
Ayden Zielke, County of San Diego  
Chelsea McGimpsey, County of San Diego  
Ernesto Rios, City of San Diego

Julie MarLett, City of San Diego  
Lesley Dobalian, San Diego County Water Authority  
Loisa Burton, San Diego County Water Authority  
Mariah Mills, City of San Diego  
Sally Johnson, Woodard & Curran

**Interested Parties to the RAC**

Bill Luksic, San Diego County Water Authority  
Cristina Torres, Viejas Band of Kumeyaay Indians  
Gail Patton, San Diego County Water Authority  
Inken Mello, Woodard & Curran  
Jordan Alejo, City of Oceanside  
Mark Stephens, Public  
Mia Gil, Viejas Tribal Government  
Mick Cothran, Fallbrook Public Utility District  
Mina Ziaei, San Diego County Water Authority  
Taj Garber, Public

**Welcome, Introductions, & Land Acknowledgement**

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Mr. Richard Whipple, County of San Diego (County), welcomed everyone to the virtual RAC meeting. Ms. Sally Johnson, Woodard & Curran, reviewed the virtual meeting process including how to use the virtual controls and chat feature. Meeting participants were encouraged to enter their name and organization into the chat for roll call and to update their name on Zoom.

Mr. Whipple read the Tribal Land Acknowledgment to the group, which was written to be delivered in a virtual setting:

*We acknowledge that this virtual meeting of the San Diego IRWM Program Regional Advisory Committee is taking place in the traditional lands of the Kumeyaay and Luiseño people. As we begin this meeting, we acknowledge and honor the original inhabitants of our region. A land acknowledgment is a critical step toward working with native communities to secure meaningful partnership and inclusion in the stewardship and protection of their cultural resources and homelands. We respect these ancestral grounds where we are collectively gathered and support the resilience and strength that Indigenous people have shown worldwide.*

**Project Completion Report**

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Ms. Julia Escamilla, Rincon del Diablo Municipal Water District (District), presented on the District's Rincon Customer-Driven Demand Management Program (Program). The objective of the Program was to provide smart technology to show customers real-time water consumption data and conservation opportunities to reduce overall water use. The District purchased and installed 812 Advanced Metering Infrastructure (AMI) meters, 1,000 meter transmitter units (MTU), and WaterSmart software and notified and assisted all customers with the use of WaterSmart software.

The District sent leak detection notices within 72 hours to their customers, and with the WaterSmart software, the District was able to share real-time water consumption data and home water reports. Some customers preferred not to be compared to their neighbors. The District modified the home water reports to remove that comparison and focused on communicating water savings and encouraging customers to conserve more water. The original MTUs were also becoming obsolete by newer and better technology, and the mixed variety of

meters were causing problems for the MTU vendor. The District also received additional funding from the Department of Water Resources (DWR), which extended the Program to 2022.

In total, 29,180 potential leak alerts were successfully sent to customers. Customers were able to use these alerts to repair leaks in their homes. The District estimated that approximately 402.44 acre-feet or 131,135,454 gallons of water were saved during the duration of the Program, which saved customers about \$1.1 million.

#### Questions/Comments

- Job well done! The Program is a good model that other agencies can follow and shows how a one-size-fits-all model does not always work. Were nurseries able to take advantage of this Program?
  - The District does not have a significant agriculture sector. Our agricultural customers are less than 1%. Because of the state mandates, it was difficult to determine the Program's savings. The District estimates that it was a combination of the mandates and accessible data that led to the water savings.
- Does the District also use AMI for billing?
  - Yes. It was one of the reasons why the District used AMI.
- How did the District decide on sending leak notices within 72 hours instead of 24 or 48 hours?
  - Two main factors were considered in this decision. The first factor is how many staff were available to answer questions. The second factor is that customers usually repair leaks within 72 hours.
- The modified home water report is quite difficult to understand. It seems like the District is congratulating the customer.
  - That is a mock home water report, so it is somewhat different from what the District sends to customers.
- How much did water rates change over the seven years, and was that a significant factor in reduced consumption?
  - Water rates always had an impact, but the District does not specifically know how much water rates impacted the reduced consumption.
- Is there an app where customers can check their usage on the phone?
  - Yes. Customers can also get notifications via text, voicemail, and email.

#### **California Water Plan Update**

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Ms. Elizabeth Lovsted, San Diego County Water Authority (SDCWA), presented updates on DWR's California Water Plan (CWP). The CWP is the state's strategic plan for sustainably and equitably managing and developing water resources for current and future generations. It also presents the status and trends of the state's water-dependent natural resources, water supplies, and agricultural, urban, and environmental water demands for a range of plausible future scenarios. The intended outcomes of the CWP are to promote climate change adaptations that ensure the state's water resources are resilient, support the state's regions as they undertake watershed-based, multi-sector resilience planning with technical guidance, data, tools, decision support, and funding mechanisms, and strength water equity in state, regional, and local planning and decision-making to help ensure the human right to water in California.

Draft sections were reviewed by targeted stakeholder groups. Section 4: Resource Management Strategy (RMS) was reviewed by members of the Roundtable of Regions (RoR) and SDCWA. The section focused on watershed approach and climate change resilience, highlighted the best practices for governance, coordination, engagement, planning, and monitoring, and incorporated an equity lens. The RoR and SDCWA requested more emphasis on IRWM.

Case studies on watershed resilience are anticipated in the final section. SDCWA submitted a case study on IRWM-funded projects in Chollas Creek Watershed for consideration. The case study highlighted the process for identifying needs, alignment with regional goals, partnerships and community engagement, and a wide variety of benefits.

Questions/Comments

None.

**Drought Resiliency Workgroup**

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Ms. Ayden Zielke, the County, presented updates on the Drought Resiliency Workgroup (Workgroup). The Workgroup has incorporated RAC input on the prioritization criteria and one the seven preliminary project(s)/program(s). The prioritization criteria were applied to the preliminary drought project(s)/program(s) to see which project concepts ranked higher. The Workgroup recommended the Water Use Efficiency Incentive Project because it aligns with previous drought funding program guidelines, meets a need not currently being addressed, and was the highest scoring project. The Water Use Efficiency Incentive Project combines incentive programs with leak detection and repairs and reduced financial barriers for underrepresented communities (URCs). The project targets residential and multifamily customers and includes indoor and outdoor incentives program, a resource database, and a community development program.

The Workgroup's recommendation will be further developed in the Drought Resiliency Project Technical Memorandum (TM). The Drought Resiliency Project TM will be released for public review in July.

Questions/Comments

- Will there be an agency managing the Water Use Efficiency Incentive Project?
  - One of the requirements that was considered during this process was if the project could be supported by the Regional Water Management Group (RWMG). The RWMG can officially sponsor the project or can partner with an agency that has proper jurisdiction.
    - The SDCWA has experience managing large conservation programs and the City of San Diego runs similar programs. It would make sense if the RWMG will lead the project.
- Will the new Drought Contingency Plan for the Colorado River impact regional plans for San Diego?
  - That is different from the Workgroup. There may not be specific impacts, but this can be discussed at a future RAC meeting.
- Will SDCWA's impending move out of drought restrictions impact the Drought Resiliency Project TM?
  - That will not impact the Drought Resiliency Project TM because the TM focuses on the project. However, the move out of drought restrictions may impact the SDCWA's competitiveness of future drought grants since those grants prioritize agencies that have a higher level of water shortages.
  - Since most of the state is out of drought, future grant opportunities may focus on climate resiliency.

**Grant Administration**

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Ms. Loisa Burton, SDCWA, presented updates on grant administration. Total grant funding awarded to the San Diego IRWM Program is approximately \$133 million for 84 regional projects. Close to \$91 million has been spent to date. Actual funding reimbursed to local project sponsors totals \$88 million in payments. \$42 million grant funding remains for all active grant programs, including the second round under Proposition 1. Seven projects remain in Proposition 84, Round 4, and the program is scheduled to end by March 2024. Two projects remain in Proposition 1, Disadvantaged Community Involvement Grant Program. Five projects in Proposition 1, Round 1 are more than 70% complete, and Project 4: Lower Santa Margarita River IPR Pilot Project will be complete soon. An amendment request is currently pending with DWR to revise Project 1: 2020 Regional Water Use Efficiency Program (Project 1) and Project 6: North County Recycled Water Project (Project 6). Project 1 is revising its scope to offer WaterSmart landscaping classes online, and Project 6 is revising its scope to rehabilitate an existing 3 million gallon (MG) storage tank instead of constructing a new 0.25 MG water storage tank. Three projects remain in the Urban Multibenefit Drought Relief Program, and the program is scheduled to be complete by December 2025. Project 2: Ballard Well Connection and Transmission Pipeline received its advanced funding for \$432,500 from DWR. The funding agreement for Proposition 1, Round 2 was executed in April, and the statewide kickoff meeting facilitated by DWR took place in late May. The region’s kickoff meeting was held on June 1 and the first progress report is due by June 15.

Questions/Comments

None.

**State and Federal Funding Opportunities**

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Ms. Burton presented a list of upcoming state and federal funding opportunities. They have been included in the table below.

Project Types	Timing	Website
<b>USBR:</b> Drought Resiliency Projects	Anticipated to open June 2023	<a href="https://www.usbr.gov/drought/index.html">https://www.usbr.gov/drought/index.html</a>
<b>USBR:</b> Applied Science Grants	Anticipated to open June 2023	<a href="https://www.usbr.gov/watersmart/appliedscience/index.html">https://www.usbr.gov/watersmart/appliedscience/index.html</a>
<b>USBR:</b> Cooperative Watershed Management Program – Phase 1	Anticipated to open early July	<a href="https://www.usbr.gov/watersmart/cwmp/index.html">https://www.usbr.gov/watersmart/cwmp/index.html</a>
<b>USBR:</b> Desalination Construction	Anticipated to open June 2203	<a href="https://www.usbr.gov/watersmart/desalination/index.html">https://www.usbr.gov/watersmart/desalination/index.html</a>
<b>USBR:</b> Planning and Project Design	Anticipated to open June 2023	TBD
<b>USBR:</b> Title XVI Authorized Projects	Anticipated to open June 2023	<a href="https://www.usbr.gov/watersmart/title/">https://www.usbr.gov/watersmart/title/</a>
<b>USBR:</b> Title XVI WIIN Act Water Reclamation and Reuse Projects	Anticipated to open June 2023	<a href="https://www.usbr.gov/watersmart/title/wiin.html">https://www.usbr.gov/watersmart/title/wiin.html</a>

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Project Types	Timing	Website
<b>USBR:</b> Large-Scale Water Recycling Projects	Anticipated to open June 2023	<a href="https://www.usbr.gov/watersmart/largescale/index.html">https://www.usbr.gov/watersmart/largescale/index.html</a>
<b>SWRCB:</b> Prop 1 Technical Assistance Funding Program	Open: rolling	<a href="https://www.waterboards.ca.gov/water_issues/programs/grants_loans/proposition1/tech_asst_funding.html">https://www.waterboards.ca.gov/water_issues/programs/grants_loans/proposition1/tech_asst_funding.html</a>
<b>DWR:</b> Water Desalination Grant Program	Open: rolling	<a href="https://water.ca.gov/News/Public-Notices/2020/Sept-2020/Water-Desal-Grant-CAP">https://water.ca.gov/News/Public-Notices/2020/Sept-2020/Water-Desal-Grant-CAP</a>

### Public Comments

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- There is value of having conversations across wide spectrums in the San Diego Region. The IRWM Program and the RAC have empowered local communities and defies the one-size fits all approach.

### Summary and Next Steps

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#### Next RAC Meeting:

- October 4, 2023 – 9:00-11:30 a.m. via a virtual platform.

The meeting schedule for 2024 will be announced at the October RAC meeting.